

Eve McBain
Head Pupil Manifesto 2019 - 2020
Knox Academy



Ambition - Respect - Community

EVERYBODY

- ✓ COMMUNITY
- ✓ CPR
- ✓ PUPIL COUNCIL
- ✓ RESPECT
- ✓ S5 SUPPORT
- ✓ DUKE of EDINBURGH
- ✓ MEDICAL AND LAW SOCIETY
- ✓ SUPPORTING AMBITION
- ✓ MENTAL HEALTH

About Me:

I have been at school in Haddington throughout my education. I have represented Knox Academy at hockey and I am a keen swimmer with both Haddington Swimming Club and Knox Academy. While I swam competitively I was awarded the most improved female swimmer award at Haddington Swim Club. I have always been very motivated to support Knox Academy and I would like to continue doing this in a leadership role during my final year at school.

My commitment to the Knox Academy community:

I commit to everybody across Knox Academy that I will do everything in my power to represent the pupils and staff as I represent the school throughout our community in Haddington. I have ambition to make improvements that I have set out in my manifesto. I have confidence that these will all enhance the school's values; ambition, respect and community.

Why would I be suitable for the role of Head Pupil?

To find the most important qualities that a Head Pupil would require to support the whole school community, I spoke to numerous members of the last two leadership teams.

From these discussions the key thing I learnt was: the role of Head Pupil can at times be extremely challenging but when something goes well, the job is very rewarding.

I also learnt the following:

Firstly, our Head Pupils should be focused on setting new challenges, leading new challenges and continuously improving areas of the school. I work the most effectively when I am faced with a challenge. I find I am most motivated when one of my teachers sets me a challenge. I have little difficulty in staying **motivated** as I always like to be as successful as possible and continually improve.

This drive that I have for success and improvement would work well within the role of Head Pupil as a good Head Pupil will be setting new targets to improve and introduce **new ideas** all year round.

Secondly, I learnt that the role is for someone who is able to demonstrate **leadership** while at the same time able to work effectively in a **team**.

Through being the Medic Mentor Ambassador for Knox Academy I have learnt a lot about **team** work as I have attended council meetings where I work with all the other ambassadors from all over the UK.

When I am in school, I am still part of the Medic Mentor team but since I am the only ambassador at Knox I must show strong **leadership** to be able to lead successful support for pupils considering a career in Medicine, Dentistry & Vet Medicine.

Thirdly, I identified that strong **communication** is a vital skill needed for a Head Pupil as they must be able to work in a team by communicating with the leadership team and often staff members or pupils.

I demonstrated strong **communication** while working in the winning YPI team last year. I worked with four members of my year group to research and prepare a presentation and a video to compete against other teams in an attempt to win £3000 for East Lothian Special Needs Playscheme (ELSNP).

This experience gave me the chance to learn about my strengths and develop some areas of my **communication** and **team** work skills that I would need as Head Pupil.

As a **team**, we fully committed by working together both inside and outside of school, to the best of our abilities, resulting in us winning the £3000 for ELSNP. I believe that it was our long term commitment and strong **communication** that allowed us to win against some very strong S5 competition.

I also feel that our Head Pupils are of no greater importance than anyone else in S6. This should be shown in how well they can listen to others around them. In my first few years at Knox I was noticeably less confident than many others my age. Even though I wanted to, my lack of confidence meant I never applied for a position on the Pupil Council.

As Head Pupil, I would be determined not to let any quieter voices be lost. I'm very focused on supporting a fully inclusive school where all pupils can contribute.

The combination of the qualities I have detailed above are fundamental for a Head Pupil. Without these, the Head Pupils and their team may struggle with delivering their policies.

I hope that my manifesto reflects the strengths that I would bring to the position Head Pupil; **motivation, leadership, new ideas, team work and communication**.

My Aim:

If elected, my main aim as Head Pupil would be to support and build a greater sense of **community** across Knox Academy, support ambition for everybody and to improve the **respect** pupils have for everyone and everything at Knox.

Before writing this manifesto, I asked several staff members two questions: What areas of Knox Academy they thought currently need the most focus, and if they could, what would they change about the school.

An overwhelming majority of teachers said that relationships between pupils, between pupils and teachers and between pupils and Knox itself was an area for improvement.

After listening to the members of our school, I decided my manifesto would be centred around policies that will help improve a greater sense of **community** and to really improve the **respect** pupils have for everyone and everything at Knox whilst also supporting **ambition** for all pupils.

My Policies:

- Increase every pupil's **ambition** by improving the support for academic achievement
- Improve pupil **respect** by reforming the pupil council
- Build more of a **community** by working together to promote physical and mental wellbeing

Community: The British Heart Foundation Scotland CPR course

My proposal is to lead CPR training across Knox Academy and raise awareness of the location of all the defibrillators across Haddington.

The British Heart Foundation Scotland is currently working with all local councils in Scotland to provide every secondary school in the country with a CPR course.

In just two hours this course can train and give anyone the vital skills needed to save a life.

The most effective CPR training is carried out with as many people as possible working together. Therefore, this course would mean everyone would have to come together as a team.

My aim is to widen participation in CPR beyond pupils by making the course available to all parents and carers.

By working together to learn CPR, the sense of community at Knox will improve.

In August 2018 I completed a full day course in First Aid which qualified me in CPR.

I would work with staff to have as many people as possible complete this lifesaving course. My target would be to have over 300 pupils in S3 – S6 and over half of our teachers complete this course by April 2020.

This would mean pupils and many staff would gain an extremely important life skill but it would also mean that these pupils, staff members and our parent community would be working together to benefit both the school and our wider community.

Respect: Ensuring the pupil council is a voice for everyone

Currently, the Pupil Council is a good way for pupils at Knox to get their voice and opinions heard while working in a team. The Pupil Council consists of three pupils from each year group (one from each house) and the S6 leadership team.

At the moment, to join the Pupil Council, pupils from S1-S5 must receive the most votes in their house election. I personally feel, and I know that others around me feel that because the only way to be elected is to receive the most votes, the same, confident pupils are being heard each year, preventing many quieter opinions from being shared.

In addition, as not much effort is required to join the Pupil Council, these roles are sometimes taken less seriously than they should be which is leading to some members not providing fair representation. If pupils know they are not being heard, these representative roles and the Pupil Council will not be respected across the school.

Therefore, I propose some positive changes to the way the Pupil Council works:

- S1-S5 candidates would complete a mini application form telling their fellow year group why they should be elected. These would be scored, counting for 50% of the campaign meaning the vote would only count for the other 50%. By doing this, not only does it mean candidates will take the responsibility more seriously but it would also encourage candidates who may be less confident, to be heard and stand for election. The application process would be supported in SE classes.
- S3 pupils would be given the chance to run for not only a place on the pupil council but for Head of the Junior School. This would give all S1-S3 pupils more of a voice which would be heard at leadership meetings, creating a stronger connection between the junior and senior school.
- Pupils would not be elected onto the Pupil Council for more than two consecutive years to allow different people the opportunity.

These alterations across the Pupil Council would ensure it is opened up to more pupils who could represent many more pupils.

Not only would these alterations mean more opinions are heard, but it would also mean that the role of being on the Pupil Council would be well respected.

Ambition: UCAS or Employability class for S5

For some jobs or further education courses, specific subjects are needed to get the successful job offer, college or university offer. For some courses it is crucial that these qualifications are all achieved in S5 and not S6. This can mean there is a lot of pressure in deciding subjects for S5.

Currently, pupils applying to university have access to a UCAS class for S6 and pupils going onto college or straight into employment etc. have access to an Employability class in S6.

From my experience (and many of my peer group's experience) I think that there could be improved support in S5 considering for the majority of pupils, this is the most challenging academic year.

I would offer S5 pupils a UCAS or Employability class which would allow pupils to gain more knowledge into further education courses. A UCAS or Employability class would give S5 pupils the support needed for exploring different courses and for knowing the entry requirements before it is too late. This would then prevent pupils from making the wrong subject choices and would prepare pupils for S6.

Ambition is created where goals are set. If this class gives S5 pupils the chance to make some personal goals for their life after school then ambition will be created here.

Community: Duke of Edinburgh Award (DofE)

The Duke of Edinburgh Award is improving my confidence hugely and it has improved my team work skills to a standard that they would never have reached without this opportunity.

If I was elected Head Pupil, I would aim to have as many pupils as possible gain access to this extremely rewarding experience.

At the moment, the access we have to this award has the potential to be improved.

I have already spoken to multiple teachers around the school and have received backing from them for the idea of widening pupil access to DofE.

I would work with these stakeholders around the school and the community to support and help highlight the many benefits I have had from taking part in DofE so we can deliver higher participation. This would give many pupils the chance to complete a highly respected award which would definitely improve a pupils application for a job or further education.

If a pupil has this award on their CV, it means they can be far more ambitious with their further education or job goal.

Ambition: Introduce a medical society and a law society

Almost every year, the most competitive courses to get into for any university are Medicine, Dentistry, Veterinary Medicine and Law.

In October (as long as I get the results I need) I will be applying to study Medicine at university.

Over the past few years of preparing to apply for medicine, I have learnt so much, had successes and have made mistakes - all of which I want to share with others who could benefit. I am aware of current S3, S4

and S5 pupils that are aiming to apply to one of these courses in the future. I have been thinking of how I can support these up and coming pupils for a while now and I have come to realise that S6 pupils currently going through the beginning of the application process have the experience and knowledge that will be of great importance to anyone soon to be in the same position. I know that last year I would have benefitted hugely by having a senior pupil who had been through the process answer any questions I had.

Due to personal experience and regardless of the results of this year's leadership team elections I will be introducing and leading a Medical Society (medicine, vet medicine and dentistry) this year. Currently I am the Medic Mentor ambassador for Knox Academy. I meet with the other ambassadors from all over the UK at council meetings up to three times a year. Being a Medic Mentor ambassador has allowed me to meet and work with doctors and current medical students who have agreed to help me set up the new society which will support and advise pupils considering this career path. I have received backing from Mr Illingworth and I will be starting to set up the society before the summer holiday.

The society will be for pupils of any year group but I expect the group will be mainly focused on S3 – S5. We would meet as often as needed, mainly for support and to allow any pupils to learn from successes mistakes I or any other S6s have made.

A medical society would aim to encourage pupils to think of applying into these courses, building on the ambition we have as a school.

In partnership with the Medical Society I hope to organise a Law society for aspiring Law pupils that would also be run by S6s applying to Law this year.

One of the aims of Medical Society and Law Society would be to ensure they could be continued by other future S6s.

Community: Introduce a Mental Health Committee

As awareness of mental health is slowly improving across the UK, more and more people are admitting to having mental health problems.

This means the issue of mental health in school's is continuously rising and becoming a bigger problem.

The pupils leaving Knox Academy today are very likely to be studying and working for over 55 years and everybody deserves the opportunity to be able to talk openly about mental health.

Since mental health is such an important issue which impacts everyone, I propose to set up a Mental Health Committee to work with teachers, guidance and parents.

In September I will be completing my first mental health first aid course, allowing me to become a mental health ambassador for Knox.

By working alongside Mr Tait and the Scottish Association for Mental Health, I would aim to have at least 30 mental health ambassadors for Knox by this time next year. These ambassadors will be senior pupils available to support students of any year group struggling with a mental health problem.

My plan would be to set up a Mental Health Committee made up of the ambassadors. This new committee would potentially work and collaborate with the Charities Committee to raise money for mental health charities and raise more awareness of mental health support at Knox.

The committee would focus on getting rid of the stigma around mental health and improving how mental health is supported across the school community.

In conclusion:

I have given the details of my six strategies to support my manifesto policies and I have confidence that these policies will all enhance the school's values; **ambition, respect and community**.

Thank you for your support.